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No. CCCCIII.

FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA.

The Acting Edition

MARINER'S RETURN.

A Drama, in Three Acts.

BY

HENRY H. PUTNAM.

TOGETHER WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS AND FULL DIRECTIONS FOR
ACTING AND PRESENTING THE PLAY.

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NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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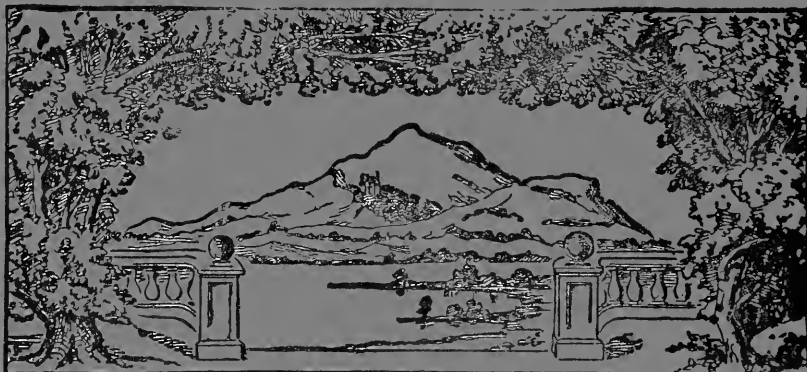
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The Drawing Room mounted can be seen at 25 West 23d St., New York. Full directions accompany each Scene.

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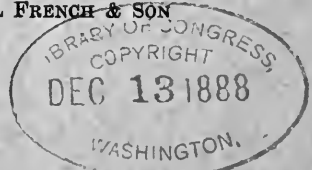
A Drama in Three Acts

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CAPT. LAWRENCE, AGED 60, - *Inn Keeper*
HOWARD LEE, AGED 22, - *A Sailor*
NED BARRON, AGED 22, - - *His Friend*
JOSIAH DOBBS, AGED 70, - *An Ancient Mariner*
ERASTUS HARDHEAD, AGED 25, *A Ship's Cook*
ANNIE, AGED 21, - - - - *Daughter of Capt. Lawrence*
MARY, AGED 20, - - - - *Daughter of Josiah Dobbs*
TILLY, AGED 20, - - - - *A Maid*

COSTUMES MODERN

12-37976

THE MARINER'S RETURN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Interior of the Village Inn. Plain furniture. Table, L. C. Chairs around room. Centre door and windows, R. and L. in flat. Door, R. 2 E. Door, L. 2 E. CAPTAIN LAWRENCE discovered seated in chair by table.*

CAPTAIN. Well, well, I 'spose I should be happy on such a day as this. Yet 'tain't over-natural for a father to feel kinder sad on his daughter's wedding day, though she be goin' to marry the smartest lad that ever trod a ship's deck. Ever since my little wife died, fifteen long years ago, Annie has been the sole comforter to lighten my sorrow. God bless her gentle heart! And now, just as old age begins to creep upon me, I must lose her. She says she will be the same kind daughter, but in her love for that young sailor, Howard Lee, I am afraid she'll lose some of the old affection for her father. But I mustn't let my sorrowing stand in the way of their happiness. To-day she leaves the shelter of this roof, and I must be as gay and happy as the rest. Well, they shall have the handsomest dinner that the larder of my inn can furnish. [*Enter TILLY, L. 2 E.*] Hello, Tilly, how fine ye look to-day. Where'd ye get all them fine fixings?

TILLY. Yes, massa, I is kinder fixed up fer de missus' wedding. Where'd I git um? De missus gib em ter me ter fix up ter wait on de folks at de dinner. Ain't da gay?

CAPT. Yes, they be. An' I shall be proud to have you at my table. How are ye getting along? Did ye fix things as I said?

TILLY. Yes, massa. I'se put on de old china, wid de paintin' on em, an' de big soup-bowl, wid de silver ladle, an' missus is a putting some flowers on from de garden.

CAPT. That's right. Has the parson come yet?

TILLY. No, sah, Massa Lee hab gone down fer him.

CAPT. Well, I guess I'll go an' draw the ale, an' fix up for the ceremony. [*Exit, right.*]

TILLY. Oh my, ain't dis jes' lubly! Golly! I nebber 'spected ter hab so many fine fixings before. Dis neckerchief jes' becomes my complection. Ain't I handsome? An' dis dress! It's jes' de mos' perfectist dress I ebber saw. Doan' I wish 'Rastus could see me now? I could jes' steal his heart away quickern a wink. But 'Rastus am nuffen but the ship's cook, an' I'se too good-lookin' fer him, I is. Golly! I'se jes' de swellest lookin' yeller gal I'se seen fer a long time. I do hope 'Rastus will cum heah ter day. I jes' wants ter show him what a supereated lady I is. Oh! I'se so awfully happy. (*Sings.*) (*Any song may be introduced.*)

[*Enter MARY and ANNIE, left.*]

ANNIE. Why, Tilly, you seem bubbling over with mirth to-day. Do you share in my happiness?

TILLY. Yes, missus; I wishes yer much joy, an denn I—I——

MARY. Ah, Tilly, has 'Rastus at last spoken the words?

TILLY. 'Rastus! Doan' speak of him. He am nuffin but a ship's cook. He ain't swell enough fer me.

MARY. Oh, Tilly; Erastus is a good fellow. I think he is coming up here to-day.

TILLY. 'Rastus coming up! Yer doan' say so. Oh, I'se so gla—dat is, I hope he won't kum neah dis inn. I jes' won't stay heah, if he does.

ANNIE. Well, Tilly, we will see that 'Rastus keeps his distance. Will you go and open the front door to receive the rector?

TILLY. Yes'm, imejiantly.

[*Exit, left.*]

ANNIE. I shall soon be a happy wife, Mary. That thought is a pleasant one; yet, in being a wife, I must leave this, my childhood home—the home of the gayest and saddest scenes of my life.

MARY. True, Annie; but the new home under your hands will soon be as dear a one as this. The little cottage which Howard has furnished is perfectly lovely.

ANNIE. Indeed it is, and I love it for Howard's sake. But, Mary, I feel that you have a secret to tell; come, I invite your confidence.

MARY. I, a secret! Why, what put that into your head?

ANNIE. Some sure signs. At times you are sad, and momentary exclamations, as though you were about to confide, escape from your lips. Why is it?

MARY. It is because you have guessed the truth; for I have a secret to tell you. I have not dared to speak about it, but you have opened the door to my heart.

ANNIE. Thank you. Sit down here, and speak freely. (*Both sit.*)

MARY. When I look upon your approaching marriage, the thought comes to me that, were I beloved where I love, I, too,

might be as happy as you. But mine is a love that is not returned.

ANNIE. Oh, how can it be?

MARY. It is so. The man who could make my life a blessing thinks no more of me than as a friend. Oh, Annie, you cannot understand the pain and suffering of an unrequited love.

ANNIE. Why did you never speak of this before? Who can console better than a friend? My heart weeps in unison with yours, though, as you say, I cannot fully realize your sorrow. However, I do know the sorrow of being the object of a hopeless love, for there is one who loves me hopelessly. But tell me his name, and perhaps we can find a way to win his love.

MARY. It is one whom you well know. It is the friend of your future husband—Ned Barron.

ANNIE. Ned Barron! Oh, unhappy circumstance! He is the one I spoke of, who confessed a love for me that I could not return.

MARY. Then mine is indeed a hopeless love. If he loves you, how can I ever hope to change that love?

ANNIE. Wait, there is a chance. Perhaps disappointment in his love for me may lead him to turn to you as a more worthy object.

MARY. More worthy! No, it can never be so.

ANNIE. Come, Mary, don't be downcast; cheer up, and let him see you gay. Trust in God, and all will be well.

MARY. I will try to be happy to-day for your sake.

[Enter HOWARD, centre.]

HOWARD. Well, you two are almost inseparable. You fairly rival Ned Barron and myself in intimacy. Oh, Annie, what a bright and beautiful day this is. It does seem as if it were made to honor the happiest hours of our life.

MARY. I guess I'll go into the parlor; I seem to be in the way. Good-by. [Exit, left.]

ANNIE. Poor Mary! Yes, Howard, your happiness is mine, and it would be to me a perfect day were not its beauty marred by one unpleasant thought.

HOWARD. Pray, what sorrow can my Annie have on her wedding day?

ANNIE. I will tell you, for there should be no secrets between you and I now. Before I am your wife, I wish to tell you freely what is now uppermost in my mind.

HOWARD. I am all ears.

ANNIE. Mary Dobbs has just confided to me that she is hopelessly in love with your friend Ned Barron.

HOWARD. Ned! But why is it hopeless? He has not lost his heart yet.

ANNIE. Ah! you do not know; for worse is to come. A

week before you asked me to become your wife, I had a similar offer from a man whom I considered only a friend. I told him that my love belonged to another. He left me, resigned though not content. I pitied him more because he was your friend Ned Barron.

HOWARD. Has he dared to offer his hand to you? He knew of my love. Is it possible he can be so mean a friend? Why did he not tell me of this?

ANNIE. Gently, Howard. Had he not as much right to seek my love as you? and would he not endeavor to conceal a hopeless passion? Be charitable, Howard.

HOWARD. Yes, you are right. I am hasty. This is truly enough to make you sad. What can we do?

ANNIE. I will tell you what to do. The friendship between yourself and Ned Barron places you in a position to approach him on the subject.

HOWARD. Yes.

ANNIE. Now, promise me this—that you will see Ned and try to persuade him to forget his love for me, and think of Mary, who, I am sure, would die for his sake.

HOWARD. Indeed I will, as soon as I can. My hasty speech is forgotten, and I shall think only of Ned's welfare. Poor fellow, how he must feel! [*Enter JOSIAH, c. d.*] Hello, Josiah, all ready for the ceremony?

JOSIAH. Ay! ay! my hearty, all taut.

ANNIE. I am glad to see you, Uncle Jose; you don't get up this way very often.

JOSIAH. Well, I hain't much on gettin' round, fer a fac'. Shiver my timbers, ye look as pretty as a pictur', Miss Annie. Be my Mary up here?

ANNIE. Yes, she is in the front room.

JOSIAH. How be ye, Howard, my hearty?

HOWARD. Oh, I'm smothered with joy.

ANNIE. You are pretty lively for a smothered man.

JOSIAH. He! he! to be sure. What a spanking big chap ye air, now. Why, I remember when ye wa'n't nuthin' but a leetle cabin-boy, aboard the Sea-Gull.

HOWARD. And I have good cause to remember you then.

JOSIAH. Them wus happy days fer me. Them's the times I went aloft and furled a sail as lively as ye can. But I'm old an' condemned now, and can't even keep a stiff keel in a light wind.

ANNIE. You are pretty smart for a man of your age, though.

JOSIAH. Maybe I am, but nuthin' ter what I used ter be.

HOWARD. Indeed, you're not! I can see now your muscular form, on a stormy night, braced like a rock against the wheel, holding the lives of all on board in your hands, and bringing us out of danger, safe and sound, when no other man could do it.

JOSIAH. Yes, I was a purty good hand at the wheel, ter be sure; but then I was born on the water, an' I hope, when old Davy says ter come, I'll go by a wet way, an' lay my old bones on the bottom of the sea I love so well.

HOWARD. I hope that won't be soon. And can I ever forget that winter night?

JOSIAH. Ah, my hearty, will ye never tire of tellin' that yarn?

ANNIE. Do tell me about it, Howard.

HOWARD. I will, and don't you interrupt me, Josiah.

JOSIAH. Well, I won't, but tell it kinder easy.

HOWARD. It was a cold, dark night, and Josiah and I were standing under the lee of the after-cabin. Suddenly the ship gave a lurch, and the huge main boom swung toward us. Josiah saw it coming, and stooped in time, but it struck me square in the shoulders and in a moment I was overboard. Being unable to swim, I was sinking, when a strong hand grasped my collar, and the deep voice of Josiah bade me have courage. For full fifteen minntes he kept both heads above water. The cold was intense, and I could feel that the brave man's efforts were becoming more feeble. But in response to Josiah's cry of "man overboard," the ship hove to and lowered a boat. After a long search they came upon us, when it seemed as if we must surely go under.

JOSIAH. 'Twas mighty cold that night, ter be sure.

HOWARD. Cold! Your hair and beard were covered with ice when we got on board. I was a boy then, a man now, yet I feel as if I owed my manhood to this old man. Annie, you will share in my respect for him.

ANNIE. Indeed, I will.

JOSIAH. Lord bless yer purty face, miss. It wa'n't nothin' but my love fer the boy! I—I—well—blast my toplights—ye make the tears come. Josiah Dobbs sniffin'! This beats me. I hain't nuthin' on fine speeches, but I love ye, miss, as I do the boy. You're a good friend ter my darter, and I—I—what, more salt-water! Shiver my timbers, I hain't dropped so many tears fer a long spell.

HOWARD. You're a brave man, Josiah, and only brave men shed tears from the heart.

JOSIAH. That's enough, boy—now, no more. Jes' come out here, Miss Annie, I wan' ter show ye suffin'. Mary and I hev fixed up a leetle wedding present fer ye. Right out here. Shiver my timbers, I hain't felt so happy fer many a day.

ANNIE. Oh, do let me see it. Now, Howard, don't forget your promise, and take the first opportunity to fulfil it.

[Exit JOSIAH and ANNIE, C. D.]

HOWARD. That I will. Poor Ned! My first thought was a malicious one, but that is past, and I am all sympathy. How he must suffer, to see the object of his love married to another,

and that other his best friend. I now see why he had an engagement which would keep him from my wedding. I wish he were here. [*Enter NED. c. d.*] "And pat, he comes." Why, Ned, I didn't expect to see you here to-day.

NED. I know, Howard, but I didn't feel just right about treating you so. Howard, old boy, I congratulate you on the partner you have won. I—I—hope you'll be very happy—and Annie—may she—I trust—God bless her.

HOWARD. Thanks, my old friend. Ned, I know it all.

NED. What! you know of my hopeless love? And you will gloat in your triumph—will laugh at my misery?

HOWARD. Laugh at your misery! Why, Ned, can you believe me so base a friend? No! I pity you from the bottom of my heart, and it shall be I to show you a possible escape.

NED. An escape! By what means?

HOWARD. Yes, forsake this unhappy love; seek another one who will return your love. Is there no other whom you think might love you?

NED. No—no—there is none, and if there were, her virtues could not compare with those of your Annie. No, Howard, when I see you married and my last hope gone, I will leave this place, no longer a pleasant home to me, never to return.

HOWARD. Not so. There is one who possesses all the virtue and grace of Annie, who would die to gain your love.

NED. Who might that be?

HOWARD. Pretty Mary Dobbs.

NED. What! Mary—Mary Dobbs. No—no—you are mistaken.

HOWARD. She told my Annie those very words not half an hour ago.

NED. Is it possible? This is news. It sheds a ray of sunshine over my night. Let me think about it, Howard. It may perhaps influence my decision.

HOWARD. Brave Ned! I know you will be happy in the end. (*Looks at watch.*) But the time is near, and I am wanted. I shall not ask you to be present, for I don't think it best. For a time, good-by. Believe in my love for you. [*Exit, left.*]

NED. Yes, I do believe in your love, but I can never love you as I did. You are the innocent cause of the curse of my life. Oh! the pain, the misery of a passion that can never be realized. Can it be true that Mary bears a love for me? If so, then it must be like mine, a love that hates itself. Then there is a bond of sympathy between us. Mary is fair and good. Perhaps—but no, my heart revolts at loving her. At the feet of Annie, the dearest, greatest passion of my life is laid. No other love can turn the tide. Ere long she will be Howard's wife, and my last hope gone. The last hope—no—perhaps Howard—may die, perhaps—oh! God, remove that fearful thought before it takes root in my heart. No! I can

only find relief in flight. This very night I'll leave my home forever. (*Sits on chair, burys head in hands.*)

[*Enter ERASTUS, tragically, c.d.*]

ERASTUS. Ha! am dey all fled from de approach ob de Bloody Vampire? No matter. I will search dem out, were da at de bottom ob de bottomless pit. Oh! I'se tough, I is. I was born an' brought up in a tough town. When I opens my mouf, let de world tremble. (*Sees Ned.*) Dere's Massa Ned. Jes' de pusson I wan' ter see. Massa Ned, cap'n wished me ter present dis order to yer. (*Gives letter*)

NED. Oh! Thanks, 'Rastus. What can it be? (*Opens letter.*) I hope— (*Reads.*) Thank Heaven. I am to report on board the Fire-Fly at once, as she sails in an hour. And Howard, he will have to go too. His joy will be short-lived. Why does that thought-please me? I cannot help it. Farewell to my youthful dreams. Farewell to everything that I hold dear. [*Exit, c. d.*]

ERAS. Gone! left without a word ter cheer my lonely heart. But I will be revenged. I'se on yer track; beware, beware ob Ho'se-fly Pete. [*Enter TILLY, left.*] Ha! she comes, der white lily ob de blue noses. Fair statuette, I salute you.

TILLY (*aside*). Why, dar's 'Rastus. Ain't I glad he's come. Mister Hardhead, why do yer press yer contentions upon me? I can nebber become yours. I is too high in social persition ter hab anything ter do wid yer—a ship's cook.

ERAS. Wha— dis ter me. I who hab sacrificed eberything ter persess yer. Tilly, does yer mean it?

TILLY. I does. You is beneaf me, an' I'se not going ter stoop so low.

ERAS. Oh! dis am too much. I will go. Der high Mucker-Muck ob de Tuskeroraras despises yer. Heah am de one token ob yer false confection. (*Throws a bandanna at her.*) Take it, and nebbermoah tink ob Erastus Hardhead. [*Exit, c. d.*]

TILLY. 'Rastus, 'Rastus, doan' go. Come back, I'se fooling wid yer. Oh! he am gone. (*Picks up handkerchief.*) An' dis am all he hab lef' me. I'se jes' gwine ter cry. (*Weeps.*)

[*Enter CAPTAIN LAWRENCE, right.*]

CAPTAIN. Why, Tilly, my lass, what might be the matter wid ye?

TILLY. Oh! massa, I'se-a-jes' be'n-n-n gone-n done it. 'Rastus (*sobs*) hab gone-n-way m-m-mad, an-an-he sa-says, I a-ain't goin ter see-ee him n-no m-moah. Wha-what's I gwine (*sobs*) ter do?

CAPT. Well, well, that's too bad. What have ye done, Tilly, to make him mad. I thought ye were the best of friends.

TILLY. I—I—jes' g-got so s-stuck up with my n-new things, I—I—jes d-doan' care (*sobs*), I'se g-gwine t-ter take em-r-right off.

CAPT. Now, my little gal, don't take on so. I'll see 'Rastus myself, and fix it all right. 'Rastus thinks a mighty sight of ye.

TILLY. Does yer tink so? An' will yer see him? I'll be jes' de gladest gal dat ebber libed.

CAPT. Yes. But wipe away yer tears, and run and fix the eatables, for my daughter is now married an' the party is coming.

TILLY. All right, massa; doan' forgit 'Rastus. [*Exit, right.*]

CAPT. The words have ben said which makes my Annie a wife. I am now the father of as fine a lad as was ever reared in this town. I s'pose I should be gay. But somehow I can't feel that I've got a daughter any more. Here they come. Don't they look handsome! [*Enter HOWARD, ANNIE, MARY, and JOSIAH, left.*] Here ye are. The banquet is spread, an' we're all ready for ye.

JOSIAH. Shiver my timbers, cap'in, ye should be a happy man, with such a manly fellow fer a son, and a darter that the biggest man in the land might be proud of. I congratulate yer, cap'in. Here's my flipper. (*They shake hands.*)

HOWARD. I hope to prove a worthy son to you, my new father.

CAPT. Yes, my boy, I know you will.

MARY. And let me say my word, too. To you, Annie, my dearest friend, I wish much joy, and may the same love which has blessed your friends brighten the life of your husband.

ANNIE. Thank you, Mary. I hope to show in my new life, the good times and the bad times to come, that I wish to be worthy your regard. But come, the dinner which my kind father has prepared is waiting for us.

JOSIAH. Blast my toplights, I do feel an emptiness in my bread-basket.

CAPT. This way, my friends.

[*Exit right, all but HOWARD and ANNIE.*]

ANNIE. One minute, Howard. I saw Ned going down the hill. Did you see him?

HOWARD. Yes, I saw him here. He came to wish me happiness. I told him all. I think I raised a spark of hope in his breast. He said he would try to *think* of Mary's love.

ANNIE. Oh! I am so glad. It lifts a great weight from my heart. Let us go. [*Exit right.*]

[*Enter ERASTUS, cautiously, c. d.*]

ERASTUS. Not-er-soul in. I hab bust de chains ob captivity an' roam on dis earth a free man. An' she, on whom I hab spent many a bit fo' caramels an' chocolate, hab steeled her heart

against my irrespectable contractiveness. She who hab swapped kisses with me frew de ba'n-ya'd fence. But I'se gwine ter be revenged. Nuffin but bl-blood will satisfy my thirst fer soda-water. Heah, in dis house, will I confornt her, an' demand an explanation, an' de return ob dat fifteen cents she borrowed ob me. I hab los' all faith in women. "I hate de world—I hate myself."

[*Enter CAPTAIN, right.*]

CAPTAIN. Why, what ails ye? You're stampin' round here like a wild colt.

ERAS. Yes, sah, yes, sah, I'se jes' soliquifing—dat's all.

CAPT. You're jest the man I want to see. Now, my Tilly, here, wants to get married mighty bad, an' I've jest set my eyes on you as about the right man to look after her.

ERAS. No, sah! dat can nebber be. She hab conjected my suite. No, sah, I scorn yer perposal.

CAPT. Hold on, 'Rastus. I know all about it. She feels pretty sorry for treating ye so. She told me so herself a short spell ago.

ERAS. No, yer doan' say so. Does yer know, cap'in, I'se jes' berginnin' ter tink dat dat Tilly ob yours am de spunkiest gal I'se seen fer some time. Jes' say a good word fer me, an' by de tin horn ob der Majestic Seven, I'll stick ter yer like a porous plaster.

CAPT. That I will, 'Rastus, and I'll fix it up right off. Wait here, an' I'll send her in. [*Exit, right.*]

ERAS. Is I awake, or ineberated? Am dis a yaller gal I see befo' me, her lips beneaf my own. Come, let me hug de. I hug de not, an' yet I swar I saw de as plain as dis bright nigger comin' dar.

[*Enter TILLY, right.*]

TILLY. 'Rastus, can ye forgib me?

ERAS. Forgib yer! De Roaring Ripper ob de Home Baseball Club am heah at yer feet. Oh! I cannot cringe too low, or strike too high, ter aspres my humbility fer you, fair gal. Yes, Tilly, my heart am big as de whale's, an it am busting wid lub fer you. Can yer not see by de awful rollin' ob my bres' an' de heaving ob my eye-balls, dat consistance without yer would be wus dan life widout watermelon? Heah, me, fair being, as I lay my offering ob lub at yer feet. (*Takes off shoe, and lays at Tilly's feet.*)

TILLY. 'Rastus, does I heah de truf?

ERAS. Yer does. I lub yer better dan dat fifteen cents yer owe me.

TILLY. 'Rastus. How dar yer refer ter dat loan? If yer lub ain't wuf fifteen cents, I doan' want it. I will sen' yer a check fer de amount. Farewell, yer hab los' me forebber.

[*Exit, haughtily, right.*]

ERAS. Erastus Hardhead, yer am a fool. I hab don' wid all lub. No moah am I ter sit in sequestered solitude on a bag ob potatoes, when de heabin' billows make heabin's in my stomach, an dream ob lub in a garret. No moah shall de sizzling of de cap'in's steak remine me ob de kisses I hab swapped wid her. Heah, by dis shoe, dis tiny shoe, I swar it.

[Enter ANNIE, HOWARD, CAPTAIN LAWRENCE, JOSIAH, MARY, all laughing. HOWARD and MARY go to C. of stage; CAPTAIN, JOSIAH and MARY, up right; ERASTUS, L.]

HOWARD. This is, indeed, the happiest day of my life, captain; I'll try to be a good husband and one worthy of your respect. We'll be together for a whole week now, my darling. Captain Reed, of the Fire-Fly, told me yesterday that he did not think he would be able to set sail for at least a week.

JOSHUA. Captain Reed is a good sailor, but I don't like him as a man.

CAPTAIN. Me neither, Josiah.

HOWARD. Hello, 'Rastus, you up here. How is everything aboard ship?

ERAS. All right, sah. I 'most clean forgot. Heah am a 'pistle from de cap'in. (*Gives letter.*) I wish you lots of joy, sir. [*Exit, C. D.*]

HOWARD (*opens letter and reads*). An order. My God! The Fire-Fly sails in half an hour, and I am to report at once.

ANNIE. What is the matter? You look pale.

HOWARD. Read that, and you will know the cause. (*Annie reads letter aloud.*) "Howard Lee: You will report at once for duty, as we shall set sail at 4.30 this afternoon. Signed, Captain Reed."

ANNIE. Howard, is this true?

HOWARD. Yes, it is true, and I must go indeed. And to think that I must part with you, perhaps forever, when I have just obtained the right to call you my wife. My courage almost fails me.

ANNIE. But *must* you go?

HOWARD. Annie, I am an honorable man, and Captain Reed holds a contract, signed by me, for two years. I am bound by a State and moral law to respond to that order.

CAPT. Just about what you'd expect from such a man as Captain Reed.

JOSIAH. Yes,—that's so; but you must do your duty, my boy.

ANNIE. Yes, Howard, you must do your duty.

MARY. Perhaps there's some mistake, and you may not have to sail.

ANNIE. That's true. God bless you, Mary, for *that* thought. (*To HOWARD.*) Quick—go—there may be some mistake. (*HOWARD shakes hands with all characters quickly.*)

HOWARD. Yes, there may be some mistake. I'll run fast as the wind, and hope—yes, hope. But should I have to sail—good-by, my darling, good-by (*Kissing her.*) May heaven bless you and keep you safe till I return.

[*Exit, c. d., quickly.*

ANNIE (*running to c. d.*). Gone! gone! Perhaps forever. God protect him. (*Falls against c. door.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. More cosily furnished. TILLY discovered, dusting.*

TILLY. Dese am strange times. Ever since Massa Lee lef' us on missus' wedding day, we ain't heard nuffin from him. Mos' folks say he am dead, but missus' doan' seem to take it quite right. It am now two years since he went away. Massa Barron hab cum bac', dey say. And den dar's 'Rastus. He ain't been ter sea since he got lef' when de Fire-Fly sailed. It does seem as if we nebber would git square, though I is dreffully 'fon' of 'Rastus. But he am so funny. He am always gettin' off sumfin about de——

ERASTUS (*outside*). Villian, I'll tar de lim' from lim'. [*Enter, c. d.*] Whar am de blushing rose ob de desert? dis fair Tilly, de idol ob my heart.

TILLY. 'Rastus, am it yer melonious voice dat speaks dese words?

ERAS. Ha! am you heah? You who hab caused my pants to grow baggy wid kneeling at yer feet? Away! hens from dis roost forebber.

TILLY. 'Rastus, will you nebber be seasonable? (*Weeps.*)

ERAS. No! I is not to be salted by yer unkind dispersition. Go! ere dese lily-white han's am stained wid de blood ob yer ancendents.

TILLY. Oh! 'Rastus, would ye kill me?

ERAS. Ya-as, I hab decided ter hab nuffin more ter do wid yer, caus' dat las' pair ob pants I bought on your account ain't ben paid fer yet. Besides, you is passay. Passay am French—which means you is gone before. (*Haughtily.*) I hab concluded to fine annudder girl.

TILLY. Oh! 'Rastus, doan' talk so. I'se drefful sorry, I is, an-an——

ERAS. (*sighs, aside*). I mus' preserve my dignerty at all costs.

TILLY. I didn't mean nuffin—I didn't, honest—an' if ye'll forgib me, I'll be jes' as good—as good——

ERAS. (*aside*). Can't stan' much ob dis. (*To TILLY.*) Well.

TILLY (*coyly*). An' I is quite sure, 'Rastus, dat dey ain't anyone in dis yar town dat lubs you as much as I do.

ERAS. (*aside*). I'se a goner, sure. (*To TILLY*.) Tilly, does yer mean it?

TILLY. I does, 'Rastus.

ERAS. Den I forgib yer.

TILLY (*falling into his arms*). Oh, 'Rastus.

ERAS. Gib us a kiss, Tilly. (*Kisses her*.) Um—um.

TILLY. Ain't dis nice, 'Rastus?

ERAS. Ya-as, you bet.

TILLY. Oh, I is so happy. Say, 'Rastus, doan' yer tink dat we had better git married?

ERAS. Yes, p'raps we had. I'll ponder on it an' let yer know.

TILLY. Dat's right, 'Rastus. And we'll hab such a swell weddin'. An' we'll invite Sally Nott, an' Topsy Tuff, Germimie Snowball, an' Uncle Daniel, an' de res', an' I'll wear my new yeller ribbons de missus gib me las' week, an' yer kin wear yer new pants, an—an—an' we'll hab lots er fun.

ERAS. Yes, I s'pose we will. Say, Tilly, doan' yer s'pose yer could let me have dat fifteen cents I loaned yer a year ago las' March?

TILLY (*drawing away*). Erastus Hardhead! I hab paid yer dat loan moah dan fifteen times ober. How dare you ask fer it agin?

ERAS. Miss Tilly, yer hab nebber cancelled dat debt, an' befoah any further presperations can be made for our marriage, I mus' deman' its settlement.

TILLY. Mr. Hardhead, yoah conduct is unbeseemin' ob a gentleman. You is no gentleman.

ERAS. Ha! do you charactercize me as no gentleman?

TILLY. I repeat, sah! you is no gentleman.

ERAS. (*tearing round stage*). Ha! ha! ha! Dis ter me. Oh! oh! oh! Miss Tilly, I advise you to leab my presence befo'e I git mad, for I is fas' cornin' to dat point where I git real mad.

TILLY. Oh! yer nigger, yer; does yer s'pose I'se afraid ob yer?

ERAS. Ha! away, away. (*Tears round*.) Dis am ter much. I hab los' all control ob myself. Whar is I? Who is I? Whar's my razor? Gi' me sunthin' ter hit wid. (*Grabs chair and swings it round*.) Whew! I wants blood, I wants water, I wants blood and water, blood and water, blue blood. Whoo! gi' me more blue water, blue water, water, wa-wa-watermelons. Boo-boo-boo. (*Tears round more*.)

TILLY. Golly, he's gone mad, suah.

[*Exit, right.*]

ERAS. Whew! (*Grins, hugs himself*.) If dat ain't jes' bully. Dat's what yer call actin', dat is. Oh, I'se a lulu, I is. I hab at las' reached de goal ob my ambition. I hab studied fo' three long years, and I feel that I is now competent to take up de stage as a perfession. I tell yer what, dat was great, dat mad scene. He! he! he! I mus' place dat in my cuspidwar.

Farewell to all my maskermonial dreams. I wish I had dat fifteen cents to start on, doah. Let's see—what is dat Mister Shakespeare says about de little wanton flies getting stuck on a sea of summer molasses? It's like dis. We start——

[*Enter CAPTAIN, left.*]

CAPTAIN. Hi! ye rascal. What ye doin' here?

ERAS. I—I—yes, sah! you see, I jes' thought I'd step in heah an' see if Miss Tilly was performin' her duties as she'd oughter.

CAPT. Well, why ain't ye to work?

ERAS. (*vociferously dusting*). I is, sah.

CAPT. Well, git out.

ERAS. Yes, sah—yes, sah.

[*Exit, right.*]

CAPT. 'Rastus is a good cook, but he's eternally up to some of his nonsense. Oh, dear, will trouble never cease? My creditor has just informed me that the mortgage is due next week, and if I don't pay, the house must go. I'm afraid I must lose the old home, for I don't jest see where I can get the money to pay him. I have borrowed so much of Cousin Josiah that I don't dare ask for more. That's trouble enough for an old man like me. And my Annie! [*Enter ANNIE, c. d.*] Well, Annie, my child, how are ye to-day?

ANNIE. Why, father, I am in perfect health. Why do you ask that question so often?

CAPT. Well, my little lass, ye see I know jest how you must feel about Howard. I know ye try to be gay an' cheerful, but ye can't help a sorrowful look about your mouth, or always hold back the tears that are overflowing from your heart.

ANNIE. Yes, father, you are right. Try as I will to crush my sorrow, it will find a way of escape in some unguarded moment. I have heretofore lived in the hope that Howard would some day return. But I have given that up, for I can scarcely doubt Ned Barron's story on his return last week.

CAPT. Yes, yes. My daughter, we can no longer hope.

ANNIE. But he died bravely, and I am proud of it.

CAPT. Indeed, he did. An' Ned, he seems to feel mighty bad over Howard's death. I guess he's had a hard life of it since he left here two years ago. It's said he has made quite a fortune in his wanderings.

ANNIE. Yes, and I understand he is to invest it in building a new mill near where the old one was burned two years ago.

CAPT. That's so! Smart lad, he. Now, Annie, I've got something to say to ye.

ANNIE. What is it, father?

CAPT. Ye know my business hain't been very rushing since they set up the new hotel, an' I have been sliding back for some time. A while ago, though I didn't say anything to ye, I mortgaged the inn, and it's nigh time it was paid—in fact, it

is due next week. I don't know just how I am going to pay it, Annie.

ANNIE. Oh, father, why did you not tell me of this? What shall we do?

CAPT. I thought ye had trouble enough without being worried with money matters. Where the money is to come from I don't know, an' I fear we shall have to give up the old home.

ANNIE. No! no! not that. Give up this home, where I was born, where every remembrance of a loving mother, now dead, lingers. Oh! father, there must be some help for it.

CAPT. Poor little wife! God knows, Annie, I would fight for the home till the last breath, but my creditor is a hard man, an' he won't budge an inch.

ANNIE. Does he insist?

CAPT. He does. He says it must be paid.

ANNIE. Who is this man, this heartless man; tell me his name, and I will confront him and see if a woman's tears can soften his heart.

CAPT. It would be useless, my daughter. I can see but one possible escape, an' ye would have to be the means.

ANNIE. Tell me what it is, father, that I may do it at once.

CAPT. Ye may not like it, but it's the only way. I kinder suspect that young Barron hasn't forgot his early love for ye, an' I shouldn't be surprised if ye heard from him to that effect.

ANNIE. Father, do you think that I can forget—

CAPT. No, no, Annie, but remember your home and your old father. Ned has a clean record, an' I know when he hears of our trouble he will gladly help us out.

ANNIE. But it would not be right, for I do not love him.

CAPT. Ah! yes, my lass, but you could soon learn to, for I am sure Ned is handsome and clever.

ANNIE. I scarcely know what to think or say. This is so sudden; but give me time, let me think. It would be so strange, so—but I will leave you now, and, be assured, I shall do what is best in the matter. *[Exit, left.]*

CAPT. Yes, I know ye will; heaven bless ye. *[Enter JOSIAH, c. D.]* Hello, Jose, you up here.

JOSIAH. Hello, cap'in. Shiver my timbers, it do take hold of my legs comin' up thet hill. I hain't so smart as I was, since the rumatiz struck me below decks. How are ye, my hearty?

CAPT. Oh, as well as ye could expect. I am right sorry to see ye taken down in your old age. Ye ought to stay in-doors more.

JOSIAH. I s'pose I hed, but I mus' be around a seein' ther world, ter be contented.

CAPT. Ye're ever the same jolly tar. How is Mary gettin' on nowadays?

JOSIAH. Happy as a clam. She's a-goin' ter travel wi' thet husband of hers. Goin' abroad, she says.

CAPT. No, ye don't say so. Well, well! Right smart chap, that son-in-law of yours. But jest wait here a minute, an' I'll open a bottle of ale with ye. *[Exit, left.]*

JOSIAH. Don't care ef I do, thankee. Well, Josiah Dobbs, ye hev seen queer changes aroun' this old town in the last two years. Since that chap who be now my son-in-law discovered iron under my old shanty, I've jest bin rollin' in wealth. An' my darter, who was a-pinin' away fer that sailor-lad, feels contented and happy as the wife of that city chap. Ain't she han-sum in her fine fixin's! But I'm livin' too high, I am. Shiver my timbers, I must let up, or I shan't live to a green old age.

[Enter ERASTUS. Claps JOSIAH on the shoulder.]

ERASTUS. You is my prisoner.

JOSIAH. Blast my toplights, if I be. *(Strikes ERASTUS, who falls on the floor.)* Take that, my hearty.

ERAS. Fo' de Lor's sake, what a muscle you hab got. *(Gets up.)*

JOSIAH. Muscle! I'll muscle ye. Strike an old man as has ther rewmatis, would ye? Get out, ye black rascal. *(Chases ERASTUS round the stage. ERASTUS jumps through the window. Sound of breaking glass. Much effect could be added to this by having someone behind the scenes to imitate the sound of hens scattering.)* Ha! ha! I hain't forgot how to use my flipper yet, my hearty. *[Enter TILLY.]* Hello, Tilly, I jes' see yer chum a-goin' out thet window. I kinder guess he's gone through the hen-house, by the sound of things. I guess he's pretty nigh dead by this time.

TILLY. Does yer mean 'Rastus?

JOSIAH. Ya-as. He came foolin' round with my rewmatis, which is more than I can stan', I kin jes' tell ye.

TILLY. Oh, Massa Dobbs, yer didn't kill 'Rastus, did yer?

JOSIAH. Well, I kinder reckon he's gone to his last roost. Jest cast yer weather eye out thet winder.

TILLY *(going to window)*. Oh, lor'! Jes' see my 'Rastus. De hens is all flyin' roun' him, and he's all cut up, an' his bes' pants is torn, an'—an'—oh, what'll I do, Massa Dobbs?

JOSIAH. Wall, I shed think ye'd better go down an' bring him up on deck.

TILLY. Yes, sah, I guess I had better.

[Exit, C. D.]

JOSIAH. Blast my toplights, I hope the coon ain't hurt much.

[Enter ANNIE, left.]

ANNIE. I'm glad to see you, uncle. Father wants you to go out on the porch to open that ale with him.

JOSIAH. Ay, ay, my lass thet I will, thet I will. *[Exit, left.]*

ANNIE. Oh! why should I give this subject a moment's thought! Yet I cannot drive it from my mind. The love I bore for Howard I can never give to another. Still, is it just to myself to bury my affections in his grave? Would not God be better pleased if I laid my grief beneath the wave with Howard. And is it not my duty to make Ned happy? I see he has not forgotten his love for me. In time I may be content myself. But my father, this home—no! that is a mercenary thought. Yet though I respect Ned, I cannot give him a wife's love. Still, I can respect no one more than he, nor can I love anyone else. But I cannot bring myself to bestowing my hand where my heart is not. I must think more of this before I reach any decision. *[Exit, left.]*

[Enter TILLY, C. D., followed by ERASTUS, completely demoralized.]

TILLY. Oh! 'Rastus. How is you?

ERASTUS. Am dat old duffer gone?

TILLY. Yes, he has.

ERAS. Tilly, I is dyin'.

TILLY. Doan' talk so, 'Rastus.

ERAS. Yes, I'se a gone coon. Jes' see dis. *(Reels.)*

TILLY. Oh, doan' do so. Come right out inter de kitchen while I stick yer together. *[Exit, left.]*

[Enter NED, centre.]

NED. Nobody here! They must be somewhere round. Things look about the same as they did when I left two years ago. Annie, I am sure, is as pretty as ever. *[Enter ANNIE, C. D., head down in thought.]* Ah! Miss Annie, good afternoon.

ANNIE. Ah! *(Starting.)* What—Ned—Mr. Barron, you here?

NED. It is verily I, Miss Annie. Did I startle you?

ANNIE. Yes, I was just thinking of you, and—and——

NED. I understand you—of Howard.

ANNIE. Yes. Forgive me for speaking of him at this time.

NED. Most certainly. My own heart thoroughly sympathizes with your sorrow.

ANNIE. Thank you. I am glad to see you back again, Mr. Barron.

NED. I am pleased to hear you say that. I am certainly glad to get back.

ANNIE. Your life and experiences have been varied since you left here, have they not?

NED. Yes, since Howard's death on ship-board, my adventures have been both numerous and exciting. Poor Howard, he was my best friend. I mourn his loss sincerely. But it is the inevitable. We do not understand, but we can have faith that it is for the best.

ANNIE. Yes, yes. Mr. Barron, will you again relate to me

the circumstances of my husband's death. If you will, I promise the subject shall never be mentioned again.

NED. I will, though it pains me. About three weeks after Howard and I set sail in the Fire-Fly, we encountered a terrific gale somewhere off the Canaries. For three days and three nights the storm raged without a lull. During all that time no one dared to sleep. And Howard! He seemed to be the very life and courage of us all. When we lost heart, it was his cheerfulness which roused our drooping spirits. When we ceased to have faith, it was his brave voice, raised in prayer, that recalled our trust in a higher power. Our danger was indeed imminent, for we expected every moment that the straining ship would spring a leak. On the third night—shall I ever forget it?—the mainsail broke from its fastenings, and shook violently in the wind, greatly endangering the safety of the ship. In vain the captain ordered the mainmast hands aloft, in vain he threatened. None dared to make the attempt. Howard stood near, and, seeing the danger, without a moment's thought went aloft and lashed the sail. He must have been completely exhausted by his labors, for in returning he suddenly lost his hold and fell. In his descent his head struck a flying block, and he reached the deck dying.

ANNIE. How fearful!

NED. With a cry, I rushed to his side and bent over him. He retained just life enough to whisper, "Ned, for the love you professed to bear my wife, protect her—and—and——" He could say no more, for he was dead. Over his body there I registered a silent vow that his Annie should never want while I had a hand to prevent it. Such was his death! The storm passed next day, and we buried him beneath the sea that had taken his life.

ANNIE. Bless you for your love to my husband. But why did I not receive news of his death?

NED. A short time after, the Fire-Fly was wrecked, and all on board, save I, were lost.

ANNIE. That was indeed a fatal voyage. And yourself?

NED. My own adventures since then are uninteresting, though various. I was left in a foreign land destitute. However, by dint of hard work I have amassed a considerable fortune, and return to my native land with wealth enough at my command to fulfil my vow.

ANNIE. And is it true, Mr. Barron, that you propose to erect a new mill on the site of the old Shafdale Mills which were burned last year?

NED. Yes, I am convinced that the scheme would be a paying one, and I believe there is a still larger amount of iron to be found in this neighborhood. By the way, Josiah Dobbs has struck a rich vein on his little farm hasn't he?

ANNIE. Yes, indeed, and he is very wealthy now. Mr. Torry,

the young city contractor, who discovered the vein, seems to be a very bright business man, for he is making a good share of the profits on the vein. I suppose you know that he married Mary Dobbs?

NED. Yes, so I am informed. A very good match it is, too.

ANNIE. Yes, but I fear Mary will forget me in her exalted station.

NED. Possibly. But might not yours be as exalted as hers?

ANNIE. What do you mean, Mr. Barron?

NED. I mean this, Annie; that my chief pleasure in bringing back the fortune I have accumulated lies in the fact that with it I am able to fulfil the vow I made over the body of your husband, and I came here to-day to speak especially of a subject which lies uppermost in my heart. May I speak frankly? Will you hear me to the end?

ANNIE. Yes, yes.

NED. Judge of my motives as your heart truly dictates, and I will be satisfied.

ANNIE. I will.

NED. When I left Shafdale so suddenly with Howard, two years ago, I thought I should be able to crush out the love I bore you. I thought that in the change of scene, the excitement of another life, I could forget it. But, alas! it was too deep to be uprooted. Your sweet face has never been away from me, nor has my love for you grown cold. I think if Howard could have finished his dying words, he would have said, "and if you still love her, make her your wife." And here, Annie, with a clear conscience, believing that Howard approves of my course, I again lay my heart before you. With all the sincerity and fervor of my youth, I again ask you to become my wife.

ANNIE. Ned, this is not——

NED. Do not turn away again, Annie. You are now free, free to make me the happiest of men.

ANNIE. But I cannot give you my love, though I do respect you.

NED. Your respect is all I ask. Surely, Annie, if anyone can make you happy, it is the friend and companion of your husband. (*Takes her hand.*) Annie, do not send me away again.

ANNIE. My heart is really touched by your pleading, Ned. If, understanding that my love is dead, you will accept my deepest respect, I will be——

NED. My wife.

ANNIE. Yes.

NED (*kissing her*). At last you are mine.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Room in the house of NED BARRON; cosily and handsomely furnished. Window, left. Entrance, C. D. and right. Table, centre, with books and footstool before it. Large arm-chair, L. C. NED discovered, reading newspaper.*

NED (*reading*). “First Annual Report of the Shafdale Iron Mills: Assets, eight hundred and fifty thousand, four hundred dollars. Liabilities, two hundred thousand and six hundred and fifty dollars. Cash capital, four hundred thousand dollars.” Well, well, I am a lucky man. Half owner in the Shafdale Mills, with an income of no less than twenty thousand dollars, I have a comfortable home, and a dutiful wife to make that home a blessing. I should be happy with all this. But the means I have practised to win that wife darkens the sunshine of my life. In the rush and worry of business, I thought to blot out all remembrances of my past life, and live only for the future. But in my dreams that past presents its wrongs in fearful reality. Strive as I will to shut it out, I cannot dispel its ghostly shadow. The wicked must indeed suffer in this world. I sacrificed everything, I let nothing stand in my way to secure a wife. But, now that she belongs to me, I sometimes feel as if I’d give my life to recall—no, no, not even to myself must I confess the crime. The world believes me honest, and for myself—well—the past is past—so let it rest. [*Enter ANNIE.*] Ah, my little wife, is my lunch ready?

ANNIE. Yes, I have come to call you.

NED. I have just been looking over the annual report of the mills. It makes a splendid showing, and I am now a wealthy man.

ANNIE. I am very proud of your success in business, Ned, but I do wish you would pay the mill hands the higher wages they have asked.

NED. But, my dear wife, we pay them as much as any other mill now. What more can they ask?

ANNIE. I know, Ned. But it seems to me that as you have made so much money you could afford to give a little of it to them. They certainly need it more than we do.

NED. Oh, well, it’s business, you know.

ANNIE. I suppose it is ; but I really don't like that sort of business that grinds the poor man under foot that we may be raised a step higher in the world.

NED. Don't you, my dear ? I admire you for befriending the mill people, but I'm afraid I can't follow your suggestions, for, you see, I've agreed with the other mills to pay a certain price for labor and I must abide by the agreement.

ANNIE. Neither do I like that—the combination of wealth and capital to take away the laborer's rights. I should just like to run your mill for awhile.

NED. Would you, my dear ? I am very much afraid you would run it into the ground. But as it is a matter of business, which I could not make you understand, suppose we drop the subject ?

ANNIE. Very well. (*Pause.*) Ned, my husband, why do you look so serious of late ?

NED. Do I look serious ? Oh, I suppose it is because I think seriously.

ANNIE. I have noticed it especially. You seem nervous, and sometimes even fretful. And at night you frequently start and moan, oh, so piteously, that I am really getting quite alarmed.

NED. Is it possible ? I can't imagine what the cause, unless it be the cares of business.

ANNIE. It scarcely seems to be that. Ned, have I your confidence ? Is there not something you are concealing from me ?

NED. Why, what put that into your head, my dear ? Of course not. I am as open as the sunshine with you.

ANNIE. Perhaps it is only my foolish fears, after all.

NED. I am sure it is. Annie, did you know that this is the anniversary of the day on which you promised to be my wife ? (*Taking her hands.*)

ANNIE. Why, yes.

NED. Have you any cause to regret the day ?

ANNIE. Why, no, not for a minute.

NED. You remember you told me then that you could not give me your love. Can you say more now ?

ANNIE. I must tell you now, as I did then, that the first passionate love of my life is dead, and it can never be revived. I respect you as I do no other man, and I am happy because you love me.

NED (*sighs*). That is all I can ask. [*Enter HOWARD at door, centre.*] And are you happy and contented ?

ANNIE. Yes, I live but for you now.

NED. Bless you, Annie. (*Kisses her.*)

HOWARD. My God ! It is true.

[*Exit.*

NED. We had better get our lunch now, for I must hurry back to business.

ANNIE. I fear, Ned, that you work too hard.

NED. Perhaps I do, but some day I will give it up, and then we will travel and see the world. Good-by. [*Exit, right.*]

ANNIE. Good-by. I may well be happy with such a loving husband. [*Enter MARY, centre.*] Why, Mary Dobbs, when did you return? (*Kisses her.*)

MARY. Scarcely an hour ago, and, of course, I must come at once to you.

ANNIE. I am so glad to see you. It's 'most a year since you went abroad.

MARY. Yes, just after your marriage. How are you, my friend—well and happy?

ANNIE. Yes, indeed, I am. But tell me how you enjoyed your trip. Tell me of the things you saw, of everything.

MARY. Oh, it was just too lovely for anything. Carl was so good to me, and we saw so many people and places that I have no end of things to tell you.

ANNIE. Yes.

MARY. First we went to London, and, would you believe it, I was actually introduced to the Queen!

ANNIE. Were you really?

MARY. Yes. You see Carl had a letter of introduction to some lord over there who has a long name—I forget what it is—and he moved in the highest society, and he introduced us to lots of dukes and duchesses, and finally to the Queen herself.

ANNIE. How splendid!

MARY. Oh, we made quite a stir. Carl said I behaved excellently, considering my inexperience. Oh, it was just lovely!

ANNIE. It must have been. I suppose you went to see Westminster, and the Tower, and all those famous old places.

MARY. Oh, dear me, no. We had so many balls and receptions to attend, that we didn't have a minute to look around; besides, I don't think I should care much about poking about in those dark old places.

ANNIE. I am sure I should like that best of all. But where did you next go?

MARY. Well, you know, we went over to Paris, and of all the gay times I ever had, it was there. Oh, those Frenchmen are an awful giddy people.

ANNIE. So I have heard. I don't suppose you really enjoyed yourself there, did you?

MARY. Oh, but I did, though. Theatres, operas, and everything—until I declare I was all tired out when Carl got ready to start for Rome. Oh, it was so—so—"bon." That's French, and means "good."

ANNIE. Did you go to Rome? What a treat. How I should enjoy it.

MARY. Yes, we went to Rome, to Florence, and everywhere. I couldn't begin to tell you all about it now.

ANNIE. Well, you will, sometime, won't you? I should so like to hear about the great art-galleries there and about the ruins.

MARY. Well, I don't know much about the art-galleries, and the only ruins I saw was the ruins of my new cream silk dress (*laughs*) on which a silly young count, who was trying to flirt with me, spilled a dish of ices. But how much Shafdale has changed during my absence!

ANNIE. Yes, it has, wonderfully. It is growing every day.

MARY. What a pleasant home you have.

ANNIE. You may well say that, for Ned is a model provider.

MARY. Indeed! By the way, who was that strange-looking sailor-fellow I saw leaving your door?

ANNIE. A sailor! Why, I haven't the least idea, unless it is some of the mill-hands.

MARY. I shouldn't have noticed him if he hadn't eyed me as though he had seen me before. Annie, I cannot tell you how sorry I was to hear of your father's death.

ANNIE. I knew you would be, my dear; he died a short time after you left here. But how changed you are, Mary.

MARY. Am I? Yes, I suppose society life has polished me up a trifle.

ANNIE. You don't seem to be as frank and innocent as you used to be.

MARY. It's all seeing the world, my dear Annie.

[*Enter NED, left.*]

ANNIE. Oh, Ned, here's Mary returned from Europe.

NED. Ah! how do you do, Mrs.—Mrs.——

MARY. Torry.

NED. Mrs. Torry. I am glad to see you back in Shafdale again.

MARY. Thank you. I am sure I find it much more of a place than I had any idea it would ever become.

NED. Yes, the iron still holds out, and the place prospers. Is your husband going into business here again?

MARY. Yes, he is to take charge of the vein on the old farm again.

NED. Ah! what a place for ore that is. You were about to leave the room. Don't let me detain you.

ANNIE. I was showing Mary about the house. This way, please.

MARY. Good afternoon, Mr. Barron.

NED. Good afternoon. [*Exit ANNIE and MARY.*] My old love! Humph! much love she ever bore me; that is, real love. (*Looks at watch.*) Goodness, this will never do. I must hurry down to the mill. I have an engagement at three, and here it is five minutes after.

[Enter JOSIAH, C. D.]

JOSIAH. Hello, my hearty, I was jes' lookin' fer ye. I'm sorry fer ye, my lad, but the mill-hands hev struck.

NED. What! What's that you say?

JOSIAH. The mill-hands hev struck.

NED. Who says they have?

JOSIAH. Shiver my timbers! I was a-comin' up ther hill, and they come a-tarrin' out and a-howlin' and a-hootin' fer higher wages.

NED. I feared this would come. I must go down at once.

JOSIAH. Take my advice, an' don't yer go. They'll take yer life, fer half on 'em are armed, and there's blood in their eyes.

NED. No matter, it is my duty to go, and I will not shirk it. If my wife asks for me, tell her I will be back soon.

[Exit, C. D.]

JOSIAH. I'm afraid the boy'll git hurt ef he hain't careful. He's hot-headed, an' it won't take much ter rile them fellers. I hope his wife won't hear of it, fer it 'ud be kinder ticklish fer me ter pacify her. Oh, Lord, here she comes now, lookin' pale an' scared. [Enter ANNIE, C. D.] Good-day to ye, my lass.

ANNIE. Oh, Uncle Jose, what is the matter with Ned? He looked so pale and excited as he went out the door. What has happened?

JOSIAH. Oh, there now, my lass, don't yer take on so. It's all right. Its only the mill-hands what hev struck, an' he's jest gone down to kinder quiet them. Don't look so scared, 'cause it's all right, it's all right.

ANNIE. But I fear his temper will lead him into some danger.

JOSIAH. Don't yer think so, my dear. He'll keep jest as cool as a cucumber. (*Aside.*) Whew, what a lie!

ANNIE. But if anything should happen?

JOSIAH. Well, Annie, my lass, ef ye'd feel any better fer it, I'll jes' run down an' look around, an' perhaps I kin help a bit. But don't yer worry, fer it'll be all right. [Exit, C. D.]

ANNIE. I hope so; but I fear, for Ned has been anxious and worried, and the strikers are a rough set and would not hesitate to do an act of violence. This is the result of low wages. Heaven protect him. I could not bear a second loss.

[Exit, right.]

[Enter HOWARD, centre.]

HOWARD. And this is what I return to find. Betrayed by my friend, forgotten by my wife, and they happy as man and wife. God forgive me if my thoughts become uncharitable. Oh! false friend, you little thought, as you saw me sink beneath the wave, that I might some day rise again. But God was good and saved me from that death, and I am here for re-

tribution. I will confront him and demand that he release my Annie from her vows to him. I will force him on his knees to—but stay! She is happy in his love and no longer thinks of me. I heard it from her lips. Shall I cause her pain? No, rather would I die than have her suffer. Oh, cruel fate! Yes—I must leave this place, and they must never know the truth. Annie, I hope you will enjoy a long and happy life—and Ned, the Great Judge deal with you as He thinks best. To my very life, farewell. [Exit, c. d.]

[Enter TILLY, left. Sings.]

TILLY. Oh, dear, I is so happy. 'Rastus has been so good ter me lately. He ain't said nuffin about dat fifteen cents fo' a long time, an' he gib me some caramels de odder day, an' he doan' seem to pay no 'tention ter Sally Snowball any moah. I did t'ink at one time dat 'Rastus was kinder parcel to Sally. De idea of dat gal tryin' ter shine up ter my 'Rastus when dis chicken am aroun'. I'd jes' like to see her do it ag'in. I'm jes' goin' ter wear my new bres'pin dat 'Rastus gib me las' week, down ter Dinah More's party, so'st Sally kin see it. Won't she be evenous. Golly, how nice 'Rastus does look in his new pants. I doan' care if I do say it, 'Rastus is jes' de handsomest colored gemmen I ebber saw, an' I jes' like him, I do, an' I jes' lub him, I do, an'—an'—if he'd just say de word I'd marry him quicker'n a wink. Ah! I wonder whar he am now? Lookin' after his watermelons, I s'pose. I'se a good mine ter go out an' see. I guess I will. *(Goes toward door, centre. Collides with ERASTUS, who enters balancing a huge watermelon over his head.) (Should a watermelon not be obtainable a huge pie will answer every purpose, with the lines altered by the actors.)*

TILLY. Oh!

ERASTUS. Ho, dar. Look out de way, Tilly. I'se a-comin', I is. I'se de Lord High Watermelon Raiser, I is. Look at dat, Tilly, ain't it a daisy? Dat's de first ob de season. Raised her myself.

TILLY. Oh, 'Rastus, ain't dat lubly!

ERAS. Well, I jes' guess it am. Dis am de one I christened Queen Victory, 'cause it wus so fat. How'd yer like ter hab some, Tilly?

TILLY. Oh, wouldn't I, 'Rastus! Is yer goin' ter eat it now?

ERAS. I is, an' you kin hab some ob it, on one condition.

TILLY. What's dat?

ERAS. Dat you will gib me one sweet kiss from dose strawberry lips.

TILLY. Oh, 'Rastus, I—I—dat ain't fair.

ERAS. Kiss or no watermelon, which am it?

TILLY. If you will do it real easy, I done no as I would mine it much.

ERAS. Course you won't. (*Puts down watermelon. Opens his arms.*) Tilly! (*TILLY falls into his arms; kisses her.*)

TILLY (*releasing herself*). Dar now.

ERAS. Um-m. Now, Tilly, if you'll jes' run out an' git a big dish an' de carvin' knife we'll proceed ter reduce de surplus on Queen Victory.

TILLY. Yes, 'Rastus, I will. [*Exit, left.*]

ERAS. By gum, dat was nice. (*Takes watermelon, comes down front, and sits in chair.*) Yes, I has jes' about made up my mine ter settle down an' ask Tilly ter marry me. I'se concluded dat I doan' wan' ter go on ter de stage, 'cause when we got up dem private theatricals, down ter the town-hall, I forgot my pa't, an' I couldn't say nuffin. I dassent try it again, so I guess I'll do de next bes' t'ing, an' git married. Ha! (*Hugs watermelon, lays head on top, and sings dreamily, drumming accompaniment with fingers—tune, "Golden Slippers."*)

Oh, dose watermelons, oh, dose watermelons,

Watermelons I'se gwine ter eat

When I clime de golden stair.

Oh dose watermelons, oh, dose watermelons,

Water, wa-wa-watermels,

So juicy an' so sweet.

Dum, dum, tweedle-de-e-de-dum. Bum, bah!

[*Enter TILLY, L., with large pan and carving-knife.*]

TILLY. Heah dey is, 'Rastus.

ERAS. Hah! dat's de talk. Jes' pull dat chair up heah, an' we will commence de osperations.

TILLY. Yes, 'Rastus. (*Draws chair up.*) Dar.

ERAS. Now jes' put de pan between us—so—and de watermelon in it—so—an' one, two, three, le's begin. (*Cuts melon.*) Ah! Tilly, jes' look at dat. Ain't it red. De Queen am a good one. Dar, dar's a slice fo' you.

TILLY. Oh! 'Rastus, ain't dat fine.

ERAS. You jes' bet it am. Now, le's see how I'se goin' ter git one out fo' mesef. Dar—so. (*Cuts. Both eat. Pause.*)

ERAS. Um-um, dat's de bes' melon I ebber eat—fac'.

TILLY. Yes, indeed, it am. (*Both eat again.*)

ERAS. Dar, dat's gone. (*Lays rind on table.*)

TILLY. An' so am dat. (*Also lays rind on table.*)

ERAS. Hab annudder, Tilly?

TILLY. Yes, 'Rastus. (*Both eat.*) Say, 'Rastus, you—you is different from what you used to be.

ERAS. (*mouth full*). Yes, so I is.

TILLY (*eating*). You isn't so funny as you was.

ERAS. No, I hab decided dat I can't do de funny business wuth a cent.

TILLY. Oh! 'Rastus, hab you? an' ain't yer goin' ter roll yer eyes any moah?

ERAS. No, sah, 'cept when I look at dose auburn lips ob yours.

TILLY. An' you won't git mad any moah?

ERAS. No'm.

TILLY (*cooly*). Say, 'Rastus, does yer know dat—dat I t'ink dat you is—you is awful nice?

ERAS. (*dropping watermelon*). Tilly, does yer mean it?

TILLY. Yes, 'Rastus, I does.

ERAS. Den, Tilly, heah me as I—as I—(*risés, takes pan, and sets it on chair behind him*)—as I kneel—(*kneels*) at yoah feet. Tilly, I is clean gone on yer. I'se all busted up ober yer. I doan' wan' ter say nuffin, nor do nuffin, an'—an'—say, Tilly, will yer marry me?

TILLY. Git up, Erastus, dar! 'Rastus, I is yours fo' better an' fo' worse. (*Falls into his arms.*)

ERAS. Hah! hoo! um—um!

[*Enter ANNIE, right.*]

ANNIE. Tilly! Erastus! (*ERASTUS sits back in the pan, and TILLY busys herself with the furniture.*) I am surprised, Tilly, to see such actions in this part of the house. (*Sees watermelon.*) What is this? Watermelon in the parlor?

TILLY. Yes'm, yes'm. You see, 'Rastus, he—he——

ANNIE. Whatever you have been doing with them, this is not the proper place for such things. Remove them at once, 'Rastus.

ERAS. Yes'm, yes'm. (*Gathers rinds, footstool, tidies, and books, dumps them into pan, and, balancing latter on his fingers, sails out, centre.*)

ANNIE. Tilly, I ought to scold you thoroughly for this. Just see, my table-cover is ruined by that melon.

TILLY. Oh, missus, I is drefful sorry, but 'Rastus wus so nice, an' he—he asked me to marry him, an'—I forgot all about where I was.

ANNIE. Did you, Tilly? Well, under the circumstances I am not disposed to be severe with you, but don't let it occur again.

TILLY. Oh, t'ank you, missus, an' you won't scole 'Rastus.

ANNIE. No.

TILLY. Oh, I'se a glad chile, I is.

[*Exit, singing.*]

ANNIE. How happy she is. I wish that I were so. What is this oppressive feeling which has settled over me since scarcely half an hour ago? It seems to tell me that something strange, something unusual, is about to happen. What it is I cannot tell. I wish Ned would return, to relieve my anxiety. Ah! (*Noise of fighting in distance.*) What was that? It sounds like the cries of angry men. (*Goes to window, L.*) Yes, it is so. There are the strikers, waving their arms and shouting like mad. (*Pistol-shot heard.*) A pistol-shot. Yes, and there is

another. I do not see my husband. He may be in danger. I will go to him at once. [Exit, R.]

[Enter NED, C., hatless and coatless, supported by JOSIAH.]

JOSIAH. There, there, my lad, be quiet. The lubbers haven't hurt ye much, I guess.

NED. Yes, the villains have done for me.

JOSIAH. Here, my lad, jest git inter this chair. (NED drops into easy chair, L. C.)

NED. Call my wife. Annie, where are—come—quick. God let me live awhile.

[Enter ANNIE, right.]

ANNIE. Ned, my husband—are you hurt? Oh, Josiah, how did it happen?

JOSIAH. It's sad work, my dear. The lubbers shot him.

NED. Annie, I have but a little time to live, I am bleeding to death.

ANNIE. Oh! don't speak so. Be quiet, for heaven's sake. Josiah, send for the doctor at once.

JOSIAH. Yes'm, that I will.

[Exit, C. D.]

NED. It will be useless. It is well that I should die. 'Tis God's justice.

ANNIE. What do you mean?

NED. Annie, before I leave this world, I have a confession to make to you. Let me rest—so—'tis easier.

ANNIE. Don't leave me so, Ned—you are very dear to me—my husband—I cannot lose you, for I shall be alone.

NED. You will be happier when rid of such as I—but time is precious, and words must not be wasted.

ANNIE. Ned, you are in great pain; don't speak.

NED. I must—listen! One year ago I told you of the death of your husband, Howard Lee. Oh! my head.

ANNIE. Here—let me bind it with my handkerchief—there.

NED. Thank you, dear. Annie, that story was a fearful lie.

ANNIE. Ned! what! you are not speaking the truth, you are delirious.

NED. Alas! it is true—before heaven.

ANNIE. Then Howard lives.

NED. Would it were true. No! Annie, the worst is to come. Howard Lee is dead, but his death was not as I described it.

ANNIE. What can you mean? Quick—tell me the whole truth.

NED. Be silent, and I will. Howard and I left this shore in the same ship, he happy in your love, and I with disappointment weighing heavy on my heart. I bore for him, instead of my former love, a secret, irresistible hate—ah! there—it's gone. One night, one stormy night, we sat upon the watch together. He rose a minute and stood upon the keel of the bowsprit, and looked off toward his home, with a smile of

happiness upon his face. Then came that fearful temptation. The fiend of hate possessed my soul, my blood leaped, a dullness overcame my brain. I moved forward as if impelled by some devilish instinct—and in another instant Howard was struggling in the waves.

ANNIE. Merciful heavens! you murdered him.

[Enter HOWARD, C. D.]

NED. Yes! yes, 'tis true. I am his murderer. The ship passed on and none ever guessed the true cause of his death. Never have I forgotten his last look as he was lost to sight in the darkness. Such despair—God—look—there it is now. See, Annie, see, there is his face—that same reproachful look—take it away—out of my sight—'tis fearful. Howard—come—come—come back—here, my hand, ah! Annie, hold me—I am fainting.

ANNIE. How terribly I have been deceived.

NED. Yes, you have. Yet I did it all for love of you.

ANNIE. A fatal love it was, indeed!

NED. Annie—don't think too hard of me—for you—for your love I have sacrificed everything. Annie—love—wife, can you forgive me?

ANNIE. Forgive you—

NED. I am dying—forgive—or it will be too late.

ANNIE. Yes—I forgive you.

NED. Bless you—could Howard but be here to join with you.

HOWARD (*coming down*). He is here! and he forgives you, as God is his judge.

ANNIE. Howard alive—no! no! I must be dreaming.

HOWARD. Yes! I am Howard Lee.

ANNIE. Then, heaven be praised.

NED. Oh! fate, do not deceive me. Are you in truth alive?

HOWARD. In truth! As God's justice brought you to death, so his providence spared my life. A passing vessel picked me up, completely exhausted, after I had kept afloat for hours.

NED. Then a happier death is mine. Howard—Annie—here—quick—kneel beside me.

HOWARD. He is going fast. (*They kneel, one on each side.*)

NED. Join your hands—so. May your lives be happy—think no more of me—bless you—ah!—death—some—water—no—no—still—keep still. It's growing dark—and close. Annie, your hand—there. I cannot breathe. Howard, be good—to my—Annie—good-by. (*Dies.*)

CURTAIN.



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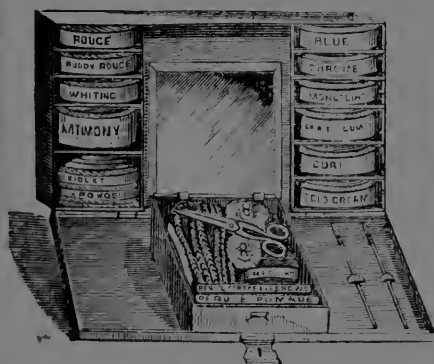
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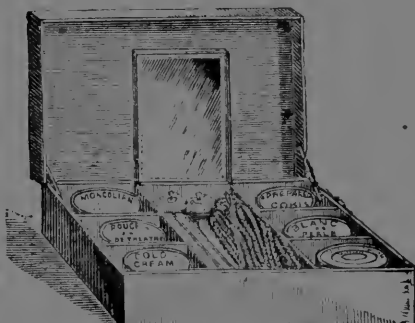
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